

JAMES TALBOT;

OR,

THE IMPORTANCE OF RECOLLECTING,

"GOD SEES ME AT ALL TIMES."



NEW EDITION.

LONDON:

Printed for the

SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE;

SOLD AT THE DEPOSITORY,

GREAT QUEEN STREET, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS,

AND BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.

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JAMES TALBOT.



CHAPTER I.

“Is there no hope, Sir?” said Lucy, following the doctor softly to the door. “I am afraid not, my dear,” replied the kind physician; “but go to the Dispensary and get the medicine, as directed, and be very careful that you give it exactly as I have ordered.” Lucy sat down a moment to recover herself from the shock which the doctor’s answer had given, before she could return to her mother, who was lying speechless and insensible from a severe stroke of the palsy. Beside the bed sat two female relatives of the family, who looked with concern, first on their dying friend, then on her weeping husband; and a little boy, her youngest child, who, too small to feel the loss he was about to experience, was eagerly crawling under the table and chairs, to overtake a kitten which had escaped from his arms.

At length a deep sigh fixed every eye upon Mrs. Talbot, who breathed her last with composure. Though she had been deprived of her senses, and was not aware that death had seized upon her, no fears were entertained by those who witnessed her departure, for the scene on which her soul had entered. For all who knew her had seen how humbly and earnestly she had endeavoured every day to make some preparation for the solemn event, which arrived at last, when she had no power to repent, had her life been less sober and religious.

Lucy had just returned with the medicine, accompanied by Mrs. Mansfield, with whom she had lived for several years, and from whose service she had been called by the illness of her mother. This excellent lady did all in her power, by religious consolation, to soothe Lucy and her father, who, himself in feeble health, felt as if his staff, his all of earthly support, was now taken from him. Mrs. Mansfield kindly undertook to direct the preparations for the funeral, and generously defrayed all its expenses. "There must be no waking Mrs. Talbot," said Mrs. Mansfield, "no entertaining of friends; the soul is gone before its Judge, and solemn thoughts should fill the minds of every one who looks upon the cold and lifeless remains of the dead." Indeed this good lady's admonition was unnecessary, for this decent man, who had just seen his wife breathing her last, had always felt and expressed, among his friends, a great dislike to such thoughtless irreverence.

When the solemn duties were all performed, and Lucy and her father returned home to their little solitary apartments, a fellow-tenant had taken to her own room the two boys, William and James, and left Mr. Talbot nothing to divert his attention from the articles about the room, which recalled the dear form that was now concealed from his eyes by the secrecy of the grave. Lucy observed this, and removed the cloak and bonnet, which for



many years had been hung on the same peg by her mother, when she returned from her work at night; and, putting them out of her father's way, took the Bible and read aloud the forty-sixth and the nine-

teenth Psalms, and also the fourteenth chapter of John. These passages brought tears of comfort to her father's eyes, and his evening prayer composed his feelings, so that he could talk with his daughter on their situation, and think of forming some plan for the future. It was agreed to consult Mrs. Mansfield, and the next day Lucy went to ask her advice. She gave it without regard to her own convenience ; for though Lucy, now twenty, had lived with her from her thirteenth year, and had become very serviceable, she did not hesitate to recommend her to live with her father, and to devote herself to the duties she owed to him and to her brothers.

“ You would, it is true, probably earn more with me,” said Mrs. Mansfield, “ and part of your wages might well be spared to your father ; but then his health is feeble, and will often need your tenderness and attention ; besides, I am afraid, if he should get a stranger to take care of his family, that the children might be neglected. I advise you, therefore, to go home and be as faithful to them as you have been to me. You have every reasonable encouragement, even in a worldly point of view, to give them the best instruction, and set them the best example in your power ; for you may be certain with the blessing of Heaven, which we may always hope for, if we strive to deserve it, that in proportion as you bring them up in the fear and love of God, they will make good sons and affectionate brothers. On their account, you had

better try to get work that can be done at home. You shall have my washing, and I will endeavour to get you employment also among my friends: you can spin and knit, you can make a shirt, and do other kinds of plain work; in short, a willing pair of hands can earn money in a great many ways, provided one is honest and industrious. I think, in this way, you will get enough to clothe yourself and the family.

“Your mother has told me that it was her care to do that, and to get fuel, while your father paid the rent of your two rooms, and provided food. You may, I think, still relieve your father from the share your mother formerly took; for though washing, sewing, and work done at home will not always be as profitable as her work, yet you will have less expense than she had, for her state of health required a great many indulgences, which you can well dispense with. In all your difficulties come to me, and you shall have my advice and assistance; but place your chief dependence upon your own industry and exertions, for that will best promote your happiness, and will make you respectable in the eyes of the wise and good; for, though they may give their money to the indolent, it is upon the virtuous and industrious that they bestow what is far more valuable, their respect and esteem. It is not, Lucy, the rank we hold which makes us valued by worthy people, but the manner in which we discharge the duties of the station in which Heaven has placed us.

Lucy thanked Mrs. Mansfield for her advice, and returned home to communicate to her father the plan—which was pleasing to them both, but particularly to him, for he needed the society of his daughter to supply, in some degree, his loss. It requires only careful attention to the subject, with a common understanding, to lay down a general scheme for our conduct; but, when we begin to *act* upon the plan, we discover that much resolution is wanted, and many virtues are necessary, to enable us to persevere in a settled and regular course. The experience of a few days taught Lucy that the management and care of her two brothers would require a great deal of patience, and oblige her frequently to seek advice from her kind friend, Mrs. Mansfield, who, having reared a large family herself, was well qualified to direct her.

William, a cripple from his birth, was naturally mild-tempered and inoffensive; but having been much indulged, in consequence of his weak state of health, he was continually requiring her attention, which she had not always time to give, yet knew not how to refuse. James was between three and four years old, a lively little fellow, whom Lucy determined to send to school, as soon as he could be properly fitted out.* But she found it much easier to earn and make up a suit of clothes, than to overcome his dislike of going to school; for though he had watched her needle, and frequently inquired what advance had been made towards the completion of his clothes, and how

soon they would be done, yet, when Monday morning came, and he was dressed for school, his hair combed, and hands and face clean, the thoughts of parting with Lucy and his darling cat overcame every thing else. “No, no, I must not go, and leave my pussy: no, no, I cannot go,” was the only reply his sister could get to all her promises and entreaties. She thought, at length, it was best not to struggle against such violence of opposition, and a week passed away before Lucy found any



favourable opportunity to renew the subject. His childish prattle at last assisted her. “See, Lucy how pussy loves me,” said he, as he sat on a stool

by his sister; "I only say, 'Sylva,' and she comes right to me, and puts her little soft head up to my cheek." "Yes, she does love you very much," replied Lucy; "how quickly she left the warm, pleasant, sunny window, because you called her; I shall be very happy when you love me as well." "I love you as well now," said James, dropping his head, as if conscious that he had not shown it by obedience; and soon after running hastily up to her, he said, between laughing and crying, "See, I have come; don't I love you now?" Lucy could hardly help caressing him, but she had the resolution to say, "I did not call you, and am too busy to want you here just now; I shall believe you love me, when you mind what I say, and do as I direct." He turned away, and Lucy was afraid he had forgotten, amidst his plays, the lesson she meant to teach; but, just as he was getting into bed, he started away to the opposite side of the room, and placing his back against the wall, cried out, "Call me, sister, and see if I don't come." The word "James" had scarcely escaped her lips before he was clinging round her neck, and asking, "Don't I love you now?" "Yes, you love me now, but will you love me as well to-morrow?" "Oh, yes, I will keep running to you all day." "But I shall not want you to do that; you know very well what it is I want, and, when you do that, I shall think you love me." "But if I go away to school, I sha'n't see you." "No, but you can think of me," said Lucy, "and think that I am happy, because you love me; as happy as you were to-day, when Sylva put her

soft head to your cheek.” “Dear little pussy, I can see her when I come home from school, can’t I, sister?” The certain assurance that he could, with the gentle persuasions that were added, led to a promise that he would go the next day; and in the morning he not only submitted quietly to the preparations for school, but seemed impatient to show his obedience, by bidding William and his cat repeated farewells, even before Lucy was quite ready to attend him.

His firmness held out even when left with his unknown teacher and the strange children by whom he was surrounded; though, when Lucy turned, in going out of the school door, she observed a slight trembling of the lips, and wishes in his eyes, that she did not dare to stay and examine. But the look could not be forgotten, nor his little straight figure as he stood beside his schoolmistress, afraid to move a hand or foot, lest he should offend this extraordinary person, whom he seemed to look upon as a being very different from any he had ever before seen. Lucy, by Mrs. Mansfield’s advice, was very careful that all his favourite amusements should be ready, and she as free as her business would admit, to show by every little kindness that her love was increased by his obedience; and though it happened, that before school was done, a vexatious accident had occurred which would have ruffled many tempers—Sylva having overturned the clothes-horse on which some muslin cravats were drying, and obliged her

to wash them a second time—she had got over the matter so well that, when James burst into the room full of joy, and every feature seeming to speak, she could receive patiently and cheerfully the flood of wonders that was poured upon her. “Mrs. Very has got a little dog with white feet, and she gave me a book with a pussy on it, and I know how to spell cat—c-a-t—and here is a red A; but where is William? I want to see him.” And to William all was again and again repeated, till Sylva at length absorbed all his attention. James had been to school, however, but a few weeks, before the cat had many powerful rivals; amongst whom was a boy somewhat older than himself, who, with a disposition naturally good, discovered even at this early age the effects of bad management. For his parents were regular in one thing only, and that was a never-failing opposition;—what one condemned the other as certainly commended; if the father reprov'd, the mother was sure to caress, and the tears that the mother's rebukes occasioned were commonly dried by some token of particular favour from the father. The child was, therefore, never sure that he had done wrong; and his sorrow for a fault lasted no longer than the pain of the whipping, or the smart of the angry slap, the severity of which was usually proportioned to the degree of the parent's petulance, rather than to the extent of poor Stephen's transgression. Young as he was, he had learned that many things might be done on,

a good humoured day, which it would be rash to attempt at other times; and it was painful to see the little fellow watch the turns of countenance to discover, not so much whether the thing might be done without impropriety, as whether it might be done openly; for, having no rule of right or wrong, but the humour of his parents—when that did not agree with his wishes, he sought for secret opportunities of gratifying them. Thus a habit of deceiving was formed, which betrayed him continually into little arts and tricks, even at school, where he had nothing to fear from pettish humour, or ill-governed temper. Between this boy and James an intimacy soon began; they played together out of school, and in it discovered their attachment by the tears or smiles of one, that followed the punishment or reward of the other. Stephen had a good disposition, and, being two years older than James, he interested himself in his success, and would have been glad to aid him in his lessons, if his own backwardness had allowed. The practice, however, of looking out for underhand means of coming to a desired end, soon afforded him the power of benefiting his favourite.

The strength of attachment with which James once regarded his cat, though now broken in upon and divided amongst several objects, still discovered his native character. Whatever he was fond of, he loved extravagantly, and all the wishes of his little heart were bestowed upon any thing he might happen to think desirable. Red letters

were Mrs. Very's reward for the youngest children; and the boy who could count the most at the end of a month, had the privilege of sitting next to her on the following week. To attain this seat of honour was now James's highest ambition, and he laboured for it with great diligence. It happened one day that, in preparing the letters for distribution, Mrs. Very dropped several under her desk. Stephen discovered them, and while repeating his lesson, watched when Mrs. Very's eye was directed another way, and, slyly stooping, slipped them into his pocket. It is impossible to say how soon the arts of wickedness may be learned, or how early in life an audacity in crime may be acquired. Mrs. Very's inquisitive glance detected not the slightest blush; and this *child* completed his lesson, and was sent to his seat, without betraying by a look the act which an honest *man* would have been unable to conceal. When school was dismissed, Stephen detained James, who was his usual companion, under various pretences, on the steps of a door, till the children had all passed, and then, taking out the letters, directed James to open his box while he put them in. "No, they are not mine," said James; "Mrs. Very gives me all I must have." "Never mind that," replied Stephen; "if you have these, you will be sure to have the most of any of the boys, and Mrs. Very will count them up, and remember nothing about how many she gave you; nobody will know it but you and I, and it will never be found out. Come, hold your box, and let

me drop them in.—Now give them a good shake. Halloo! what a parcel you have got! But you must not let your sister Lucy know that I gave them to you, because, may be, she will tell my mother, and if she is cross, I shall have a good beating."

Boys and girls! grieve for poor little James, and his wicked companion. Satan has tempted them to take that which they had no right to; and as one sin leads to another, they must add falsehood to theft, before the hoped-for reward can be secured. Stephen is more hardened in guilt, but James is ashamed to look up to Mrs. Very, who happened to pass by whilst they were talking together; he thinks she is about to tax him with his dishonesty: so true it is, that a guilty conscience needs no accuser. Remember, however, that something more is necessary than mere pity: you must take warning from this story, and refuse to imitate such a bad example; resist the devil, and he will flee from you; and never, never seek to gain any advantage, no matter how great, by doing that which would call a blush into your cheek.

This was the first concealment James had ever had, and he found it rather difficult to manage the weight that this new care laid upon him. He had been so accustomed to see Lucy's countenance brighten at hearing of his success, that he hung about her with a longing for the smiles that he knew would be produced by the increased number of his red letters, if he had dared to disobey Stephen's injunction. Sometimes he was on the

point of betraying himself through forgetfulness, and again through exultation, till at last his spirit sunk, and he was glad when bed-time came, as a relief from inquietude. Never had a half-holiday passed so sadly to poor James. Lucy observed his dejection, and had a suspicion that something was wrong. On reflection, she recollected that he had been less communicative than usual, and her heart sunk at the possibility of his having concealed any thing from her. The next morning, which was Sunday, Lucy rose in time to have breakfast and all the necessary work finished at an early hour, that she might be at leisure to take her brothers to their place of worship, and to read for them the history of Joseph, in the Old Testament. She chose the early part of the day for the latter purpose, both because her own mind was more clear and disengaged, and the children more alive to impressions, than when fatigued by past activity, or when taken off from their little childish engagements. A choice of rooms did not fall to Lucy's lot, but she was always careful that the pleasantest spot in the one she had should be selected for the boys to sit in when she talked to them of God, and of his Son, subjects connected in her own mind with all that was cheerful, animating, and happy. "You can answer very well," said Lucy, "several questions in your catechism; and you remember, James, I promised that, if you were a good boy through the week, you should learn a few more sentences to-day. I ask you the

question—‘Does God always see you?’” The cares and sorrows of a child are not very lasting; a long night of uninterrupted repose had lulled to sleep all James’s anxieties, which the light of the morning had no power to awake; and the thought of his red letters remained as quiet in his own breast, as if they had never given any disturbance there. Probably, if Lucy had allowed her suspicions to pass away without making an effort to discover the cause of his reserve, the painful feelings attending the incident would not have returned to his memory, till he was about to present his red letters to Mrs. Vero, and to seek the promised reward; and thus the first link of that endless chain, deception, would have been fixed in his heart. But when she repeated with a distinct and serious voice—“God sees me at all times, all the night and all the day; he sees me when I am alone, when no other person sees me,”—James did not follow the words as usual, but stood as if a new idea had seized upon him, and then exclaimed, “Stephen said, nobody would see me.” “See you when, my love?” asked Lucy. “When he put the red letters into my box.” This led to an inquiry and free explanation, and Lucy did not fail to improve the opportunity to impress on his mind a sense of the presence of God. She did not enlarge at this time on the wickedness of stealing, deception, &c. but confined herself to the single fact, that God is everywhere; for she considered a thorough belief in that, as the very-

groundwork of religion. Lucy felt rather unwilling to forbid an intercourse with Stephen, both because his parents were neighbours, and she wished to live on friendly terms with all who stood in that relation, if not absolutely immoral; and because she had observed that he had been more constant at school since his acquaintance with James; for though Stephen was a good-natured boy, he liked very well the sort of control that his superior age gave him over his pleasant-tempered, yielding companion. She reflected, besides, that it would be impossible to secure her brother entirely from the company of bad boys, and that she must depend, with the blessing of Providence, upon the strength of his own principles. To implant this was her constant, unremitting care, not by tiresome discourses, but by hints and short lessons, and, above all, by her own example.

The lesson which James had received from his sister Lucy, sunk deep into his heart, and on more occasions than one kept him from wickedness. The red letters were restored to Mrs. Very, who kindly forgave the fault, though she deemed it necessary to take occasion from the circumstance to warn her little flock against dishonesty. She told them nearly the same that little James had heard from his sister; and she also added an account of the consequences which always attended upon this shocking crime. "The Almighty loves us," said she, "for he made us—he preserves us—he gives us every blessing we have, kind friends,

food, clothes, comfortable homes, and, above all, the promise of eternal happiness if we obey his will; but the wicked have nothing to expect but punishment in a lake of fire; besides which, they are never happy in their own mind: they know that their heavenly Friend is displeased with them, and the thought of it spoils every comfort they might otherwise enjoy. I knew,” concluded Mrs. Very, “a little boy about six years old; in general a very good child, and one who behaved well. He dearly loved his mother, and minded every thing she said to him. But even good children will sometimes do wrong, as was the case of William Kennan, for that was his name.

“One day, after he had been at play, he looked very dull and sorrowful. He was asked, however, if he was ill, and answered, ‘No;’ but he often sighed, and once or twice his mother thought she could perceive a tear standing in the corner of his eye: she did not appear to notice it, being tolerably sure he would not long conceal from her the cause of his distress. At night he took leave of her, and went to bed; he had not been there an hour, when his mother going to his bed-side found him very restless, sobbing, and calling out that he could not sleep till he had told her something which made him very unhappy. ‘Mother,’ said this little boy, ‘I have been very wicked to-day—I have told a falsehood. I was playing with my cousins, ‘hide and seek,’ and we agreed that we would not look where each hid himself from the

seeker; but when it came to my turn, I did look, and when they taxed me with it, I said I had not looked; which was a lie: and I am afraid to go to sleep lest my heavenly Father should be angry with me; what shall I do that he may forgive me? for he sees and knows every thing.' 'My child,' said his mother, 'the Almighty is ever ready to forgive those who are truly sorry for their faults, and resolve to amend. We cannot hide any thing from him—he knows when we have done wrong, and when we desire to do what is right—he hears our prayers, and he will teach us what to do. Pray to him to forgive your fault, and endeavour never to commit the like again, lest you should offend him more by the second than the first offence.'

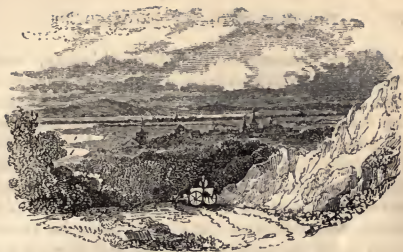
"This little boy," said Mrs. Very, "followed his mother's good advice: he prayed for forgiveness—he prayed also that he might have strength enough to resist temptation—and, his mind being thus quieted, he fell asleep, and rose the next morning happy and cheerful."

The passionate desire for red letters passed away, and was succeeded by another and another, till James attained his sixth year. It happened that, in going to and returning from school, he constantly passed a shoemaker's shop, and was often attracted by the bits of coloured morocco thrown out at the door. It chanced one day that a piece rather larger than usual had been brushed out, and James seized upon it with great

eagernesss. "What a capital bit you have found!" said Stephen; "only see, it is big enough to cover the whole front of your shoe." "So it will," said James, measuring it; but suddenly looking thoughtful and disappointed, "may be," added he, "Mr. Smith did not mean to brush it out." "That's no matter; you have got it now, and nobody will ever be the wiser." "Oh, do stop a minute, Stephen, and let me run back and lay it down where I found it." "No, that I won't, you silly little fellow; keep it yourself, and make a pocket-book: ask your sister to let you come to our house, and, if mother is gone away, I'll make some paste and fix it completely;—and I tell you again, Mr. Smith won't know you have got it." "But somebody will know it," said James, colouring. "Oh, yes, I suppose your sister Lucy tells you of a little bird that flies about, and tells her all you do." "No, she never did." "Then, who will see you?" "I am afraid to say the name while we are playing, but my sister will tell you, or I will tell you when you are not playing. Do stop a minute, and let me run back." James did not wait to see whether his request was complied with or not, and just as he got to the shop-door, a journeyman came out, who had often observed him, and had seldom passed without patting his head in token of kindness. This action, trifling as it was, gave him a feeling of confidence toward the young man, and when he appeared, James ran to him, and, showing the morocco, asked if he might have

it. “How did you come by it?” “I found it at the door,” was the reply.—“Well, you were a good boy to bring it back, but I can’t let you keep it; I shall have some red and green coloured pieces to-morrow, and you may come in and get them.” Perhaps joy never brought a brighter sparkle to any eye than to James’s at that moment, nor greater swiftness to any feet than that with which he ran to communicate the whole story to Lucy. It is a great mistake to suppose that happiness depends on situation. Two little rooms of a ten-foot building, in no very pleasant part of the town, were the residence of Lucy Talbot, her father, and two brothers; but her heart felt a gratitude which cannot be described, when she discovered by any little incident that her pupil felt that presence, the idea of which purifies and elevates the thoughts, gives refinement amidst poverty and labour, and a serene cheerfulness that the most toilsome occupations have no power to destroy.





CHAPTER II.

JAMES did not forget the invitation for the next day, but a feeling of timidity restrained him, even while his hand was on the latch of the door. He had never heard his sister beg, and he did not know how to ask for the morocco pieces. After lingering some time about the door, he rejoined Stephen, who ridiculed exceedingly his want of courage. "You had better have done as I advised, and kept the long bit when you had it." "Oh no, I am glad I did not do that." "Why what makes you glad?" "Because Mr. Smith wanted it." "No matter for that, he would not have known you had it." "But God would know," said James. "Oh, no," replied Stephen, "God lives up in the sky, and does not mind such little boys as we." "Yes, he does mind us, for he sees every thing, even the tiny flies that buz about. I never pull their wings off now, because God gave them to the little creatures, and he would be angry with me if I

should take them away." "Look this way," said Stephen, "on my knee; did you ever see such a little fellow of a spider? He is not bigger than the head of a pin: nobody but you and I can see this, because we have to look down close to him." "Oh, yes, God must see him, for I'll tell you what good care God takes of spiders; my sister told me yesterday, while I was winding her yarn. You know, Stephen, you have seen cobwebs about; well, those are spiders' houses; and how do you think they make them? come guess three times. —No, you have not got it. Now, I'll tell you; every spider has got a little bag inside of him, and it is full of something that is thin, like water, and there are little holes in the bag for it to pass through; so when the spider wants a house, he has nothing to do but to let some of this liquor run out, and when it comes to the air it grows hard, like thread, and he runs round and round till he has made his house." "That is a pretty good story, James," said Stephen, laughing; "but I would not believe it, if my own father had told me." "Why not?" "Because any thing like water never can be like thread." "We can't make it so, I know," said James, "but God can do any thing: I told you that he takes good care of spiders."

Poor Stephen had never been taught to think or observe; he therefore never believed what appeared strange, unless it happened to hit his fancy, or fall in with his own notions and habits.

Lucy, it is true, had little book-knowledge, for

she had not leisure for much reading. Saturday evening was the only time she allowed herself for any other books but the Bible, and some few religious works that Mrs. Mansfield had given her. Although those books contained much that did not apply to her situation, yet she considered, and justly too, that the poor as well as the rich are God's creatures; and that general principles of conduct are common to all. If the great are taught that this world is not the place of rest, and that idleness is a sin, she thought the injunction was much more binding on her to improve every moment to the best advantage. If the rich were instructed not to desire a crown of roses, when the Saviour wore one of thorns, the precept was consolatory to her; but she found that Providence withheld from her only what was dangerous. To these books she gave ten or fifteen minutes every day; and Saturday evening, unless some other known duty interfered, she gave to any useful books she could obtain of Mrs. Mansfield. She was very fond of finding out how trades were carried on, and things were made. And whenever she met with an amusing fact, she treasured it up in her memory, and repeated it to the boys as a reward. Let a reward be what it will, it is always connected with pleasure, and she remembered when she lived at Mrs. Mansfield's having heard one of the servants say, who was remarkably fond of eating, and made a great deal of trouble among the servants, and at last lost a very good place on account of that single

fault, that his mother always paid him for doing errands with an apple or a bit of cake. She had the good sense, therefore, to consider, that James might be made as fond of knowledge as her fellow servant was fond of eating. And she soon had reason to believe that her plan would not be unsuccessful ; —the very success of it was indeed sometimes a trial of patience, but she never failed to answer his questions, whenever a reply would be useful to him.

Not many days passed before the good-natured journeyman observed James lingering about the shop-door, and inquired why he had not been in for the bits of morocco. The truth was frankly told, and the young man, pleased with his modesty, fulfilled his promise and detained him at his knee some time as he sat at work. "What is that sharp thing you hold with the wooden handle?" inquired James, with his customary observation. "It is something to bore little boys' ears with." "How is it done?" "What is it done for?" and "To whom is it done?" were questions that followed in rapid succession, and were answered in a similar style with the first. James pondered upon the use of this singular instrument, and wondered whether he should ever be so unlucky a wight as to have it forced through his ear. He had as little fear as any boy of his age, but he could not muster resolution to go directly by the shop, when he returned from school, but walked on the opposite side of the street, with his eyes, however, steadily

directed towards the door, that he might see the danger, and be ready to run or to resist it, whenever it should appear. The next morning James did not, as usual, watch the clock on the neighbouring church, but followed Lucy as she went about her work, with such vigilant care to keep her within sight, that it attracted her attention. "What is the matter, my love?" said she, fearful that he was sick. "Nothing is the matter, only I wish it was Wednesday." "Why so?" asked Lucy. "Because you would be going to carry home the work you promised to get done then for Mrs. Mansfield; and wouldn't you go my way?" "Yes, certainly, if you wished it; but why do you want me to go with you?" "Because I am afraid to go by Mr. Smith's shop." "Afraid! of what?" "Of Bernard." "What, the kind young man who gave you the morocco?" "Yes, I am afraid of him, for he has got a thing that he puts into boys' ears, when they don't spell their lessons; and I could not learn *avoir du pois* yesterday, and now to-day he will run it through my ear." "What kind of a thing is it?" asked Lucy. "Why, it is sharp like a needle, but it is bent round a little, and has got a wooden handle." "What was he doing with it?" "He was making holes with it in two pieces of leather." Lucy sighed, and thought how much injury the inconsiderate did to children, by gratifying their own love of fun at the expense of truth: and how much trouble this practice brought upon those

who extended their care beyond the duty of feeding and clothing them. She soon removed all his fears, by explaining the use of the awl, but found it more difficult to make him comprehend why Bernard should have deceived him; nor could the best apology her own principles would allow her to make, convince James that it was not a falsehood; so deep was his abhorrence of that vice, which Lucy and Mrs. Very had instilled into his mind, that a year past away before he renewed his visits at the shop-door: and had not an accident awakened his partiality for the journeyman, the bits of morocco would have lain still longer untouched. When he found himself again at Bernard's knee, his first inquiry was, if he would tell him truly what the little fine thing was at the end of his thread. "Tell you *truly*! What do you mean by that? James then reminded him of the awl, and honestly confessed his former fears, and his dislike of being deceived. Bernard, who was really a good young man, was struck with the simplicity and fairness of the child, and promised that in future he would be very careful not to dissemble. It was some time, however, before James felt perfect confidence, and not till he had made several trials of Bernard's sincerity by repeating what he had heard to his sister.

James was now nearly eight years old, and as he could read and spell very well, and had the multiplication table as familiar as the alphabet, Lucy thought it was time to put him to

a boys' school; she therefore applied to Mrs. Mansfield, who was a member of a committee, and procured him admittance into a school where he might learn to write a fair hand, and get a good knowledge of arithmetic, geography, and grammar. The first two Lucy knew would be necessary, whatever might be his future occupation; and geography she thought useful for the knowledge it gives of the rest of the world, and the productions of different countries. Of grammar, being ignorant herself she was doubtful, till assured by Mrs. Mansfield that it would not be amiss, as it would serve to strengthen his mind by exercising his faculties, and preserve him from those gross mistakes in conversation and writing, which often subject tradesmen to ridicule. "I do not wish you, Lucy, to try to make your brother a gentleman, but to give him such information as will make him a respectable man; such knowledge as will give him a modest confidence in himself, when accident or business throws him into the presence of his superiors, and make him feel, even when before those who are the most distinguished for wealth or honour, that he is a fellow-man and a fellow-christian; and though placed by Providence in a different sphere, that the duration of this distinction is too short to give cause for envy, or any of that painful sense of inferiority, which in some tempers leads to moroseness or assumed indifference, and in others to a mean, cringing, or affected familiarity of

manner. Virtue, good sense, and general information upon subjects of common interest, ordinarily give that deportment to a mechanic that is the most becoming and respectable."





CHAPTER III.

JAMES was exceedingly pleased with the prospect of going to a boys' school; there was but one subject of regret—that his way would be no longer by the shoemaker's shop. His sister advised him to confine his visit to Bernard to days that were particularly marked by industry and success in learning his lessons, and to make his own conscience the judge when the reward was merited or not. Through the first fortnight he regularly visited his favourite haunt every day after school, without a single scruple, and had entered on the third week, when Stephen, who the day before had become his fellow-scholar, was detected in a trick, and condemned to the bench of disgrace. Young as James was, his own failures and the admonition of friends had given him a fear and dread even of the slightest deviation from rectitude: but naturally affectionate, he loved Stephen in spite of his faults, and could not

restrain his tears at his drooping head, and looks of mortification. His writing-book was before him, but he no longer observed whether his thumb was bent, or the feather of the pen pointing to his shoulder;—the strokes were miserably crooked, but the zig-zag was unregarded, for he looked more at Stephen than his copy, and even tried to catch the eye of the offender, that he might bestow upon him an encouraging nod. The opportunity to do this was soon given, and signs were passed and repassed, till the intercourse was discovered by the master. James was forgiven in consideration of his general good conduct; but the detection awakened a more severe monitor within. He looked at his writing-book, and saw by its blotted and scrawled appearance that Bernard must not be visited. To a child, trifles are great: and though the desire might be gratified on the following day, it seemed to him a period too distant to afford any consolation for present disappointment; and he looked for some expedient, by which he might escape from this embarrassment.

At first he began to think that there was no such great harm in writing one copy so indifferently; afterwards, that many other boys, with all their pains, wrote badly; and, therefore, the fault was not great; and lastly something whispered that it was in a good cause he had failed in his writing. But presently conscience reminded him that all this was but to gloss over his fault, and therefore he ought not to listen to any excuse. He had acted

wrong, and he had promised not to call on Bernard, unless when conscience should tell him all was right. Good boy! May you always be as ready to listen to conscience, and may every reader of this little book be ever ready to call to mind that the eye of the Lord is every where, beholding the evil and the good, and that there is no escaping from his heart-piercing look!

It now occurred to him that, if he did not go out in the time of play, he might write two lines so well, as to make up for the bad ones. To remain in school during the moments of joyful activity, required considerable resolution; for having gained a victory in the last play, it was now Gilbert Denny's turn to be James's horse, and Gilbert had the character of making the best horse in the whole school. But the power of looking forward, though not acquired yet in any great degree, had attained some strength from Lucy's practice of frequently directing his attention to his own experience of the pleasure resulting from difficulties subdued, and improper gratifications denied; and he now turned his head from the window, before which the gay scene was exhibiting, and applied himself with diligence to his pen. The strokes grew under his hand, and stood like a rank of soldiers, straight and uniform. He was delighted with the appearance, and completed the remainder of his exercise with cheerful assiduity. "Well," said he to himself, as he put on his hat and scampered from the school-door, "I have been

a clever fellow after all ; have got my lessons and been indus——, no, not industrious neither ; I was idle till the master found me out. But then I did not go to play ; so it comes to the same thing." The word *idle*, however, slackened his pace, and some doubts arose whether time once lost could ever be redeemed. He argued that he had learnt his lessons, but something within replied, that he had not fulfilled the whole contract : for before he made the engagement, his sister had accurately explained to him the meaning of *industry*, and he



was perfectly aware that it meant regular application. His scruples increased, and he had reached

the corner of the street that led to Bernard's without being able to decide whether he might go or not. He was near enough to see the shop. It looked exceedingly pleasant; an elm, the only one in the street, hung over it, and Bernard's arm was seen at the open window, drawing out his thread with rapid and continued motion. James pressed forward, till checked by the recollection that his sister had told him the story of a boy who became very wicked, though he began only with doing what he was not sure was quite right: and that she had told him it was always safest to do the thing that was least pleasant, when any doubt was in the way. There was now no more hesitation: he turned and went home, with regret, to be sure, but also with that quiet satisfaction which follows self command, when it is exerted even by a child. Boys are little men; the features of the countenance are not so strong, neither are the passions and affections; but as in childhood the features are the same, though smaller, so the feelings of a child, though generally not so powerful, are of the same nature as those of the man. He soon understands and feels the connexion between religion and happiness; and a right action exhilarates his little heart with perhaps a keener sense of delight than is ever felt in after-life.

Two summers had now passed away since James had become a member of a boys' school. He had acquired considerable knowledge, especially of geography. He was particularly fond of finding

places upon the maps, and tracing the relation which one country, river, or town bears to another. There was scarcely a place of note in his own country that he could not readily point out, and he took great pleasure in communicating this knowledge to his invalid brother. Part of every evening was spent in teaching William the lesson that he himself had just learned. The long winter evenings—for he was allowed to sit up till eight o'clock—gave time for this, and still left some leisure, which James commonly improved in sewing up the rips or patching the holes in the shoes of some one of the family. His apparatus for this was not very convenient; a fork with one prong supplied the place of an awl, and common brown thread that of the nice strong waxed ends he had seen his friend Bernard use. But still he was happy, for he was employed; though sometimes the whistle or the hum of a lively tune was interrupted to express a wish, that he was rich enough to buy an awl and some waxed-ends. Lucy was desirous that he should be gratified, and promised to give him the money for them as soon as he had completed putting the soles to her boots. This stimulated him to new exertion, and the work was soon finished. He received the money, and fixed on the following Saturday afternoon for making the purchase. He called on Bernard to inform him of his design, and to inquire where he could get the best; “for I have got money enough to get them good,” said he, with

something of the importance of a man who was going to buy a large estate. A few days after, when he called on his friend Bernard, who good-naturedly interested himself in his little concerns, he inquired how the awl worked, and was surprised to hear that it had not worked at all. “Then you have not bought it.” “No.” “How happens that?” “I don’t mean to get it quite yet,” replied James; and turned away so evidently to avoid the subject, that Bernard said no more. A native delicacy, which restrained him from the appearance of seeking a favour, prevented the openness he usually exhibited. He was aware that Bernard knew how he wanted the awl, and he was afraid he would give him one, if he knew that he was deterred from getting it by the desire to gratify William, whose tender health made him a constant object of benevolent attention to his brother.

William discovered a great fondness for geography, and had often wished that he could have a book on the subject, to be studying while James was at school. This was not forgotten by his affectionate brother; and now that he was master of a little money, the ability to obtain this book came so much within the compass of possibility, that he determined to lay it up till he could add enough to make the necessary sum; “and,” said he exultingly to himself, “I can get a geography and surprise William with it; but then how shall I get the rest of the money? If I could do Bernard’s errands,—but the poor fellow who does

them now wants the pay as much as I do ; so that will not do." However, it happened,—and such things do happen in the course of life,—that Bernard, who had now set up for himself, had been thinking of employing James ; and the very day that *he* had been casting about in his mind for some employment that would give him a sixpence, Bernard proposed to give him that sum every week for doing his errands and other trifling jobs.

It is not the intention of this little book to represent James as superior to his fellow-creatures, by making him exempt from the infirmities of human nature. There were times when he saw his duty clearly, and followed the path it showed, with scarcely a struggle or a wish to decline from it ; that was, when he felt diffident of himself, fearful of temptation, and anxious for that heavenly aid, without which we can do nothing that is truly good ; but there were also times when temptation came upon him, as it were, with greater force, and found him less disposed to resistance : and such an occasion now presented itself ;—he had saved up the necessary sum for the geography, and one shilling for four maps of the different quarters of the world, and was proceeding to the shop where they were to be had, when, passing by a shop window where several toys were displayed to much advantage, he saw the figure of a man with an organ on his back, which exactly resembled one of those industrious itinerants who quit their native country, Italy, for

the purpose of earning a small sum, with which to return home. Immediately he felt a longing desire to possess this plaything, and his wishes increased when the shopkeeper showed him that, by turning a wire, a tinkling noise was produced, which was intended to represent the music of the barrel-organ. His hand was quickly in his pocket, the money drawn forth, and geography, brother, and maps, for the moment all forgotten; when suddenly it flashed across him, that he had intended the one-and-sixpence for a different purpose than the gratification of his own fancy. It is very true, said he to himself, I intended it for William; but he knew it not, and will never miss that which he had no expectation of receiving. But don't you think, said conscience, that however ignorant he was of your proposed gift, it is a selfish act, and a childish one too, to change your mind in a minute; and that through desire of possessing a useless toy? No, said self, it is not ill-natured to poor William—whom, I am sure, I love very much—if I buy a pretty thing in which he will take as much pleasure as myself. No, said conscience, William will not take as much pleasure as you suppose—for, even though he should at first like the toy, you and he will soon tire of it; whereas you know the book and the maps would be a source of amusement and instruction many a day, whilst you are going about in health and strength. Well, said self, that's all very true, but I shall earn, I hope, many a sixpence from Bernard, so that I can buy the book and maps

with the next one-and-sixpence I shall receive, and that will answer William as well—a month or two can make no great difference to him, who seldom stirs from home, and then only with the assistance of his crutches. James, said conscience, if you and William were to change places—if you were weak and sickly, and he as full of health and spirits as you are, you would surely think it unkind and unbrotherly were he to say that of you, and preferred a strumming useless bauble, which may be broken five minutes after it is purchased, to that which would bestow on you a lasting and useful gratification. Whilst this struggle was going on in James's breast, the money was by turns in the bottom of his breeches-pocket and in his hand according as self or brotherly affection predominated; but it was the last observation that conquered, and made him at last lay down the figure on the counter, and quit the shop with a manly step, only once or twice looking back at the window, where he saw the shopkeeper replacing it; nor did he stop till he had reached the shop and secured the book and maps, which he had at first intended to purchase—nor was he afterwards slow in acknowledging, that the pleasure and surprise with which William received them, and the joy that sparkled in his eyes, more than compensated for the sacrifice he had made.

The point of James's fork seemed to grow sharper at the sight, and he forgot altogether the toy, and at least for some evenings, the want of his

awl. Time, however, again awakened the desire to become the owner of one; and, as his industry afforded the means, he became possessor, not only of that implement, but of a fine ball of shoemaker's thread. His evenings now passed away most delightfully, and his only difficulty was in finding shoes enough in the family to mend. Lucy was pleased with his industry, and, wishing to unite with this habit a benevolent pleasure in working for the benefit of others, she offered his services to a poor woman, with a numerous family of children, who rented the next room. To patch and mend, to stiffen the heels of the slipshod shoes of the poor little Murphys, supplied him with constant evening occupation through the remainder of the winter; and, indeed, he was sometimes so expert, that he found it difficult to whistle his tune quick enough to keep time with his hands.

Spring opened, and he rose betimes, that he might have an hour in the morning for his favourite occupation. It was pleasant enough to watch his countenance as he sat at work, and to see it vary according to the movement of his thoughts. Sometimes he would repeat the lesson he had learned the evening before, or recall what he had lately read at school; or, quick as lightning, his thoughts would be upon the playground, and his eye involuntarily cast up to watch the kite in its progress through the air, or his arm thrown aside to give the sling its full force.—Amidst all these meditations, one darling

scheme, oftener than any thing else, obtruded itself upon him. Willy Murphy, the eldest of the boys whose shoes James had made himself so busy in repairing, had worn so completely through patch upon patch, that they could be mended no longer; and James, who sat, at the Sunday-school, in a class not very remote, had often observed poor Willy cast a look of mortification upon his naked feet. To remove this source of trouble now became a favourite object, and he determined, if possible, to make a pair of shoes for him entirely himself. There were some difficulties, however, in the way of its accomplishment. He must have leather and a last. The latter he could buy, but then he knew not exactly what size he should want: and how to get the leather, and to have it cut out for a pair of shoes without troubling Bernard, were obstacles that were revolved again and again, without appearing the less insurmountable. He at last came to his usual result in all his difficulties, which was to consult his sister. She was particularly pleased with the design; for, though she wished to have him understand and feel the enjoyment of possessing and gradually increasing something of his own, yet she was afraid, by constantly laying up his earnings, or applying them only to his own use, a love of money might be so fixed, as to make the possession of it a supreme object. Lucy rather wished that her brother should learn to desire money as a means of being comfortable himself

and useful to others; and she was glad to have this feeling of benevolence break in upon the satisfaction he discovered in counting up and arranging his halfpence and sixpences. She advised him to tell Bernard the plan, and ask his assistance; this was accordingly done; and never, perhaps, was there a happier being than James, when he received from his friend the leather ready cut, with the lining, soles, middle soles, binding, and all ready to his hand. His only trouble was in urging Bernard to receive payment. At last, however, he consented, on condition that James would not begin to work on the shoes until a week from that day. The terms, though hard, were complied with; but the morning star did not shine entirely alone! When he rose on that day that he was at liberty to begin his delightful labours, what was his surprise to find in his usual work-place, a little neat bench, with a drawer in front, which, on opening it, he found contained a new awl, a last, a hammer, and some waxed-ends, all exactly suited to his purpose! He ran to his sister, and learned that it had been sent by Bernard the evening before. His delight was inexpressible when he sat down on the bench and surrounded himself with all his implements and conveniences. Lucy repeated the summons to breakfast several times before he could muster the resolution to quit his employment; and if he had not been trained to habits of order and self-government, his breakfast and school might both

have been neglected. But he had been taught that the most agreeable amusement soon ceases to give pleasure, unless it has been fairly earned by an attention to one's proper business. For



Lucy never indulged that mistaken kindness, which many poor people practise towards their children, who, thinking that they shall never probably have it in their power to procure for them many enjoyments, allow them to take pleasure how and when they can; and forget that, by husbanding amusement, its value is increased ten-fold. Besides, the principle of taking all the pleasure

that can be scrambled up when it comes in one's way, as a compensation for past hard work or future hardships, Lucy, under the advice of her friend and mistress, was careful to check, because she thought it led to vice, particularly that of intemperance. She now and then borrowed some books, which served to give to her brother a comprehensive view of life; to teach him that the multiplied cares, business, pleasures, and duties of it, should all have a bearing on the great end of our present existence—a preparation for eternity. The mind is never too young to receive the idea, that we are not living for this world alone; and that every action, however minute, however it may appear to relate wholly to the passing moment, will nevertheless affect futurity; and, as it is performed upon a right motive and with a right object, will promote or lessen our happiness. She taught him to consider rational, moderate, and innocent amusement as the gift of God, designed to refresh the spirits after fatigue, and to prepare the mind and body for a new exertion, but nowise intended as food to live upon.



CHAPTER IV.

JAMES did not at all times pursue his labours with the gaiety of heart with which he commenced them. The sun does not always shine in the sky, and he would form a very mistaken view of life, who supposed that it was not a chequered scene. Many unforeseen difficulties arose from his ignorance of the business : straits and embarrassments came in the way, which were quite unlooked for. At length, however, after many trials of patience,

and many desponding anxieties, Willy Murphy's shoes were completed. To show them to his father and sister, when finished, afforded but a slight pleasure, as they had been partakers of his difficulties and successes, and had seen the work through every stage to the completion. But there was one pleasure in reserve—it was to show them to Bernard; and they had been finished but a few minutes before they were offered to his inspection. James looked eagerly in his eye to watch the expression. There was not quite so much admiration as he expected, and his own eyes sunk to the ground when he discovered at one corner of Bernard's mouth a smile that he was trying to repress. But his disappointment soon gave way to his natural good humour, and he joined heartily in the laugh to which Bernard now gave full vent. “Then you think they are a shabby-looking pair of shoes?” said James, when their merriment had a little subsided. “They are not very workmanlike; to be sure, James,” replied his friend; “but they are exceedingly well done for you, and will answer very well for Willy's everyday shoes, and I will make a pair of Sunday ones for him.” This promise afforded a satisfaction that was only exceeded by the pleasure he felt on the following Sunday morning, when he went to put on Willy's new shoes, and witnessed the excess of his surprise and gratitude.

The success of this effort, and the enjoyment James had found in making the shoes, contributed

not a little to strengthen his habits of industry, and a fondness for exercising his faculties; and there were but few who had served one or two years of their apprenticeship that knew more of shoe-making than James did at the age of fourteen, when he was received by Bernard as an apprentice. By his diligence and expertness he performed what was required of him in a much shorter time than the other apprentices, and the hours he thus gained were hired by Bernard, who paid him regularly at the end of the week. This little income, with the consent of his father and sister, James devoted to procuring comforts and amusements for William, which he had not hitherto enjoyed. It was delightful to see the gratitude and tender assiduity of this sickly lad towards his healthy, active, and benevolent brother. Long before the bell rang for nine o'clock, which was James's hour for returning from the shop, William would creep from his seat, and with difficulty draw a chair up next to his own; and then, from his little store, pick out the best apple, and put it down to the fire to roast, and remind Lucy that a piece of coal would look bright, or that the ashes needed brushing up; and when the well-known lively step was heard, he had no eyes or ears for anything but James, but watched every word and look and movement with such an expression of love and fellow-feeling, as if there were but one heart between them. Amidst pleasures such as these, with regular occupation,

James, who was now eighteen, was blessed with that general cheerfulness that flows from good conduct. There was, however, one grief that sometimes filled his eyes with tears;—this was the misconduct of his early favourite, the good-tempered, kind-hearted, but guilty Stephen. His misjudging parents had thought more of present ease, and the gratification of their own bad tempers than the education of their only son;—they had sacrificed his good to petty quarrels between themselves, to the turbulence of angry passions, or the indulgence of idleness and indifference. The habit of deception, formed by the mismanagement of his parents, had grown stronger with his years. He went out to service, and before he had arrived at his twentieth year, he had lived at as many different places. All allowed he was the best-tempered, most obliging, and the kindest servant to children that they had ever known; but every quality which, under the guidance of the Almighty, would have led him to virtue and religion, was thrown into obscurity, and rendered useless, by want of truth and honesty. James could not bear to renounce him; for he was the last respectable friend that was left to poor Stephen. He counselled, he warned him—warned him even of the prison; but all would not do. One day James saw from the shop window a crowd of people following a criminal to the office of a magistrate. With an almost breaking heart he recognised in a pinioned, bare-headed, pale, trem-

bling creature, Stephen, the wretched victim of one evil habit. James flew to the court, but he could do nothing. The theft was clearly proved, the mittimus was made out, and though the magistrate was affected by his youth, and the look of anguish on his countenance, he could not countermand the order to prison. James did not forget the injunction to "visit the prisoner." He went every day to advise, comfort, and support him, to read to him, and to lead him to prayer, during the miserable period which intervened between his commitment and the sitting of the court. He hoped, he almost believed, that Stephen's sorrow was sincere penitence; poor Stephen himself thought it was repentance, but alas! he did not understand how bitter that remorse must be, which has power to subdue the habit that has been cherished twenty years. He was condemned to prison, where he passed many melancholy, hopeless months. At last he appeared again amongst his fellow-creatures, and returned back to the world to follow the same practices.—But I forbear to pursue his sad history.

Before James was quite twenty-one, Bernard took him into partnership. They were distinguished as "the punctual shoemakers," and gradually got into good business. My readers will be pleased to hear that James did not disappoint the hopes of his family. He is now in middle life, with an excellent wife, and a pretty family

of children. He carries on business extensively, has a large shoe shop, which is resorted to by the best customers of the town; but what distinguish him above every thing else are his piety and benevolence. He loves to trace the hand of God in all his prosperity, particularly in having given him a sister to whose instruction he owes so much. I have often heard him express his thankfulness to *God*, for having guided him through the slippery paths of youth, for having blessed him with so large a measure of worldly prosperity; but he has always added, with tears of grateful love, that he never, even after he became a man, thought of his sister's gentleness, without feeling his own temper softened; of her mild cheerfulness, without being tranquillized himself; nor of her look of meek reverence, when engaged in any of the immediate duties of religion, without having his own affections sanctified and elevated.

Few, I believe, are better acquainted with MR. JAMES TALBOT than myself; and, though Providence has placed me in a different rank of society, I can truly say, I honour him.

THE END.





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